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U. S. Department
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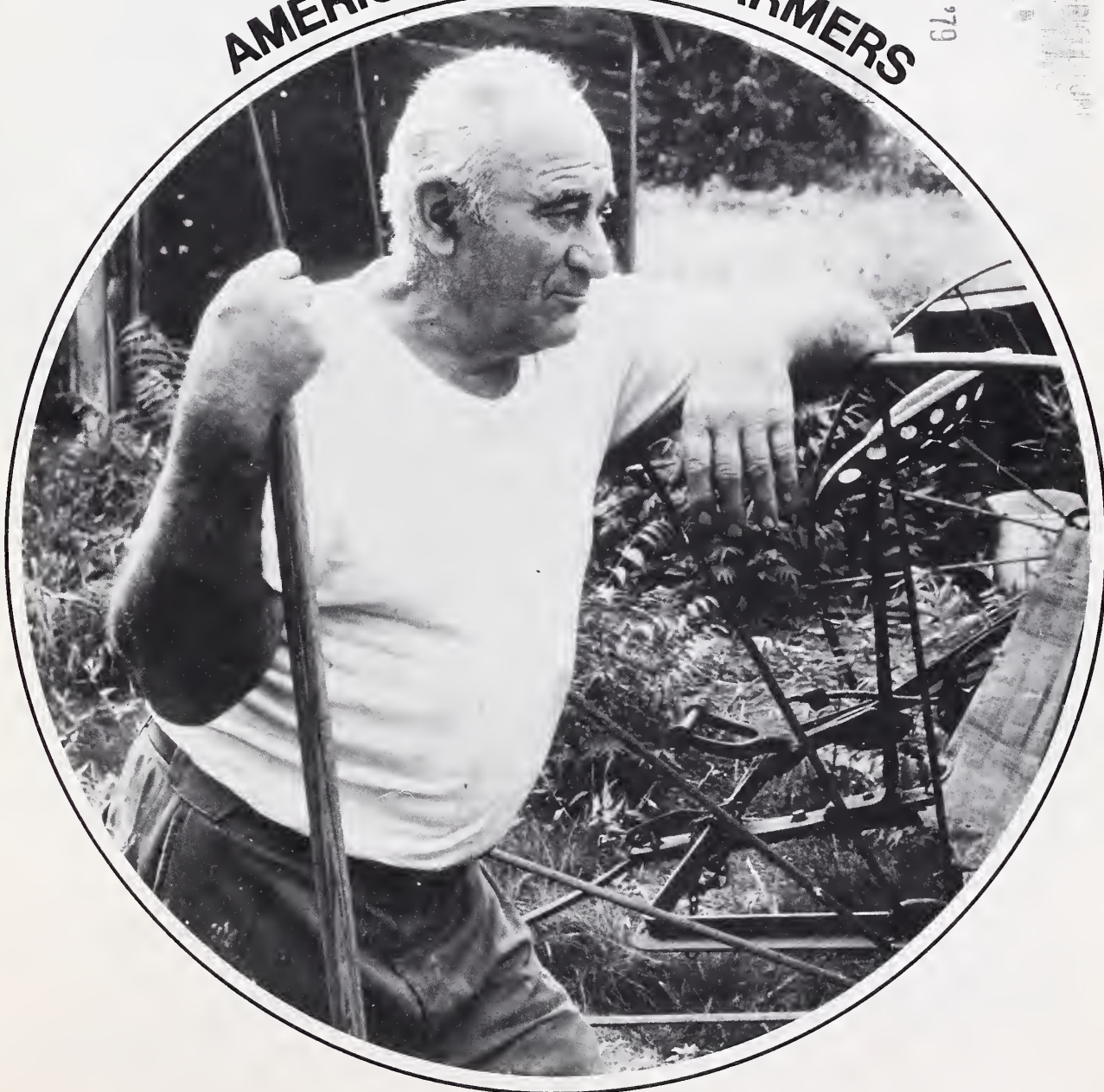
November
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1978

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AMERICA'S SMALL FARMERS



□EXTENSION review

U.S. Department
of Agriculture
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BOB BERGLAND
Secretary of Agriculture

ANSON R. BERTRAND
Director
Science and Education
Administration

Editor: Patricia Loudon

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Self-Help — 75 Years Ago and Today

“Although we want to be helpful, we know that the real initiative must come from the local level — as it did 75 years ago when a demonstration project was launched that developed into today’s Extension Service,” said Anson R. Bertrand, director of the Science and Education Administration.

Addressing the Diamond Anniversary celebration of the first farm demonstration project by Seaman Knapp on the Walter C. Porter farm near Terrell, Texas, last fall, Bertrand was honoring the beginning of a new educational technique. That educational technique for “getting research information out to the people” led to the Smith-Lever Act of May 8, 1914, which established the Cooperative Extension Service. Today this system has a staff of 16,000 professionals serving the public from more than 3,000 county offices across the Nation.

Some of these professionals and their use and expansion of this demonstration technique with small farmers at the local level are profiled in this issue of *Extension Review*. From that proud beginning in 1903 at the Porter farm, Extension is moving today into an even prouder future. — **Patricia Loudon**

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AMERICA'S SMALL FARMERS LIVING ON A FEW ACRES

by
Patricia Loudon
Information Specialist
Science and Education Administration

From early spring to late fall, Attilo Bonanomi, 67, climbs a rugged hill to his garden—the Connecticut River flowing nearby.

“As I look out over my land, the whole world is mine,” says “Til” proudly.

A retired welder, Til hauled leaves and dirt to make a gravel pit into the land he now so lovingly toils. With five acres of vegetables, fruit trees and bees, Til is not a land baron.

He is a small farmer.

Typical of the 1.9 million proud, hard-working people who see their few acres as the last American Frontier. Collectively dependent on the weather and economic market, individually these farmers are fiercely independent.

Small farm operators control 31 percent of all farm assets—land, buildings, machinery, etc. With these assets, they produce 10 percent of the Nation's farm output—about \$4,800 per farm.

Their net income from farming is low—only \$2,560. More than 80 percent of small farmers supplement this income with additional employment off the farm. Their average family income is over \$15,000, almost equal to the average income of all U.S. families.

Behind these statistics are people like Til—running dude ranches in Colorado, herding goats in Vermont, picking berries in Oregon, raising peanuts in Texas These small farmers—and their alternative lifestyle—are the subject of the



1978 Yearbook of Agriculture, *Living on a Few Acres*.

Several of these small farmers were photographed for the *Yearbook* last summer. While trudging through a muddy tobacco patch or sharing lemonade during a mid-morning break, members of the SEA information staff met these farmers. They learned more about small farms and the people who call a few acres "home." Some of these people are profiled in this article.

The Zannellis

"You break even, if you don't count your time from sunup to sunset," said Walter Zanelli. He had just climbed down from shingling the roof of the family home—this year's vacation project.

The Zannellis—Walter, Carol, and teenagers Lauri, Ralph, and Linda—also live on 5 acres. Walter and Carol work in town.

Their farm is topsy-turvy—goats, chickens, cats and dogs running underfoot; a grape arbor here; a vegetable garden there; a few beef steers out in the back pasture.

The center of all this happy commotion is the barn. Here the kids, all 4-H'ers, care for their small herd of 17 prize-winning Jersey dairy cows. Behind the barn, they grow corn and hay for feed.

Weekends are spent showing the Jerseys in competitions around the state. Their grandparents proudly accompany the kids and cows.

Grandfather, a retired farmer, started it all. He gave Ralph a calf as a present for his fourth birthday.

The Goddards

A visit to the Sundial Herb Garden is a step back in time. The carefully sculptured garden



sits behind a partially restored 18th century home. The 6-acre site was an overgrown field of weeds and grasses 8 years ago.

A transplanted urbanite and graphics designer, Ragna Tischler Goddard researched the plantings of that period in history. The herb garden with custom-carved picket fence and hand-laid bricks are Ragna's current works of art.

She no longer commutes to the city. The garden and herbs are now her livelihood.

Ragna grows and sells herb plants; packages herbs, teas, and spices; and creates dried flower arrangements. She and husband Tom are restoring a barn into a shop for her thriving business.

The Morrisseys

A young couple, Pat and Ted Morrissey, left the city for the countryside 2 years ago. Living on 3 acres has given them

more freedom and space to raise their own food.

This summer Pat made sauerkraut from cabbage grown in her garden. In the dining room, she nursed a wounded duck back to health.

The Morrisseys also raise chickens and quail and have planted a small orchard of nut trees. City born and bred, they attend monthly Extension meetings to learn proper farming practices. Last winter the couple heated their home with

wood chopped and cleared from their land.

Ted, a school teacher, and Pat, a telephone company employee, still commute each day to the city to work. "The farm" makes it all worthwhile.

The Hescocks

The sign out front reads "Jacob's Ladder Farm." The bearded young man and dog herd a flock of sheep across the Biblical setting of a rocky hillside. Only his faded blue jeans give him away.

Todd Hescock is very much a product of the 20th century.

He returned to the farm when his father died. Todd, and his mother, brothers and sisters, each contribute to making their small farm a thriving enterprise. The county Extension agent is a frequent visitor.

Todd breeds and trains sheep dogs. The flock is sheared twice a year, and the



family sells wool, lambskin, and maple syrup. Robert and Timmy Hescoc raise chickens and sell eggs to neighbors in a nearby town.

Other young people often come to live at Jacob's Ladder to learn farming. They work in the vegetable garden, tend the dairy cows and pigs, or perform other chores in exchange for their bed and board.

Community Canning Center

Another cooperative venture is the self-help community canning center. It's not just a place to can fruits and vegetables quickly. It's a meeting ground for small farmer and consumer—a place for people to learn and help each other.

Impetus for the cannery came from a group of concerned citizens who wanted to encourage more consumption of local production. The county government donates the cannery facilities free to the cooperative.



A direct marketing "From Seed to Table" program connects consumers with small farmer producers of fruits and vegetables. Newsletters alert the community of local harvest dates and nearby farmers' markets.

Linked to this is a produce-buying service for people who need transportation or assistance in purchasing produce with food stamps. An

Extension small-farm coordinator works with both the cannery staff and local farmers to keep people supplied with fresh produce.

Nine part-time canning assistants, paid through CETA funds, operate the center. A coordinating council oversees the operation. Members include representatives of low-income and minority groups, the elderly, and local farmers.

Future

As the Nation's population continues to shift from urban to rural areas, what is the future of the small farmer? If the people in *this* article are any indication, the last American frontier is—"Living on a Few Acres."

(Editors Note: Copies of the 1978 Yearbook of Agriculture are available for \$7.00. Write to Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20250) □



A TOUGH GAME TO GET STARTED

by
Chris Scherer
Communications Specialist

and
Richard Swope
County Agricultural Adviser
University of Illinois



"Three strikes, but not out!"

That describes Robert "Gene" McClerren as he began farming in Southern Illinois.

Returning from the Korean War, McClerren started farming 70 rented acres and working for the railroad. In 1956, an injury forced him to quit. "Strike one." Within a year the family had used up the small railroad severance pay and was \$1,600 in debt.

"Strike two." About this time McClerren began losing his hearing. "Strike three."

Today, Gene and Myette McClerren along with their daughter and two sons operate a 1,200-acre grain and beef cow-calf farm south of Thompsonville in Franklin County.

His strategy—good management principles; family cooperation; a lot of hard work, determination and wise use of available resources including the University of Illinois Cooperative Extension Service. Gene McClerren proved to himself, his family, and the community that three strikes need not mean out in the farming game.

The strategy the McLerrens used to develop their farm business may have some lessons for others.

The McClerrens started their *first* inning with five principles in mind—rent land, borrow money for operating expenses, purchase used equipment, build equity and savings, and increase yields.

They borrowed money from local banks and other sources to purchase farm machinery. They secured additional financing from Farmers Home Administration (FmHA), hired three men to do the physical labor, and rented 1,000 acres. Through share-crop leasing, they began to build equity in their machinery and started a small savings account.

McClerren's *second inning* strategy was to— increase acreage, add a livestock enterprise, and increase yields.

Land Purchase

The first land purchase came in 1960 when McClerren bought 72 acres. That year he also started feeding 100 beef steers to salvage a corn crop as silage. He made a profit the first year and continued feeding steers.

McClerren continued to buy land. He increased production-per-acre by tearing out old fence rows and rearranging fields. A fertility program based on soil tests and past history increased crop yields— doubling in the last 10 years. In 1977, McClerren produced 40 bushel wheat, 100 bushel corn and 50 bushel beans.

The *third inning* called for keeping adequate records.

In 1964 the McClerrens enrolled in the University of Illinois Farm Business Farm Management (FBFM) Record System. "We learned that records could

be used not only to help us make better management decisions and plans, but they could also help us make changes based on sound economic information and market situations."

About this time profits in the beef feeding operation began to decline. Using the FBFM records and the council of C. Richard Swope, county agricultural Extension adviser, McClerren decided that a cow-calf operation might be more profitable.

Cropping to meet soil type and topography became the *fourth inning* strategy.

Joins Demonstration Program

During the *fifth inning* in 1970, the McClerren family was one of five Franklin County families to enroll in the University of Illinois Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) Test Demonstration Program.

When a farmer joined in the TVA program, he agreed to keep detailed farm records using the FBFM system. Because the McClerrens were already enrolled in the recordkeeping system, they had information on which to set their goals and to begin making decisions.

Seek Advice

At least twice a year F. M. Sims, University of Illinois farm management specialist, and County Agent Swope visited the McClerrens to review their goals and accomplishments and make fertility, crop, livestock and financial recommendations. As the family needed special help, other University of Illinois specialists, such as housing and landscape experts, counseled them. Although these specialists would make recommendations, the McClerrens, like other program families, made all final decisions.

Each cooperator agreed to share with neighbors what he or

she learned. This came naturally to the McClerrens. They became an extension of the County Extension Service program by passing on methods and procedures that worked for them.

Community Leadership Roles

As the McClerrens moved through the 5-year TVA program, McClerren began assuming leadership roles in the community. He served as chairman of the Franklin County Agricultural Extension Council and member of the County Extension Executive Board.

Batting Practices Pay Off

Today, following ear surgery which partially restored the hearing loss, McClerren is able to do a good share of the labor plus much of the management.

The farm operation has not employed any regular hired help since 1960. Sons Leon and Russell, now grown and married, live on the farm and play a major role in its operation. During the cropping season, Myette staffs the family citizen band radio base and keeps all the family operation's records. During the off season, the sons have begun a contracting business utilizing the farm operation's back hoe and bulldozer.

For the McClerrens, the game is not over yet. Future innings hold unknown results. □

HELPING SMALL FARMERS— THE PRACTICAL WAY



*Debbie Cole and Attilio Bonanomi
discuss the problems of small farming.*

by
Alexander [Bud] Gavitt, Jr.
Agricultural News Editor
The University of Connecticut

Practical.

Deborah J. Cole is a Connecticut regional Extension agricultural agent who takes the practical approach to her educational programs for small farmers in the rural towns of southern Connecticut.

You might say she preaches what she practices and vice versa, as she and husband Scott are small farmers, too.

They raise a few pigs, care for two pleasure-riding horses, and tend a large vegetable garden on their 3½-acre farm in the Middle-

sex County town of Deep River. Their experiences in coping with the problems of keeping their livestock healthy and their garden productive are often similar to the ones experienced by their counterparts who gross between \$500 and \$20,000 a year.

Approach

Debbie is energetic and enthusiastic about her work with small farmers. In her job that covers three southern Connecticut counties—Middlesex, New London and New Haven—Debbie says the majority of the people look to Extension for practical

answers and advice on various food production problems.

"The needs and interests of my clientele echo over and over again—on the telephone, at evening programs, and during office visits—'Please keep your Extension Service information and programs as practical as possible,'" says Debbie.

The agent tries to see that this is accomplished in her everyday contacts with people, in planning and conducting programs, and in her agricultural newsletter on plant and animal care. This newsletter is sent eight times a year to approximately 3,000 small or part-time farmers in the state.

Programs

During the course of a year, Debbie's programs have

included: Down on the Farm Slaughtering Demonstrations, Pork Cutting and Curing, Beef Cutting, Rabbit Dressing, and many other topics. They reflect the varied interests of her small-farmer clientele.

Having mastered the basics, a growing number of these farmers often want more information on intermediate and advance levels. Accordingly, 75 Southern New England small farmers attended a 2-day advanced course in livestock and poultry management in Ivoryton, Connecticut, in early November 1978. Nineteen speakers—mostly Extension specialists from the University of Rhode Island and The University of Connecticut (UConn) and one from Pennsylvania State University—addressed the topics of Raising Layers and Retailing Eggs, Game Bird and Pheasant Farming in New England, Budgeting Small Farm Enterprises, Economics of Small Farming, Sheep Farming in New England, Nutritional Requirements of Poultry, Marketing Products from the Farmstead, and The Homestead Dairy Goat.

Surveys program needs

Debbie largely bases her programs on an annual survey of her cooperators, asking them what kinds of programs they would like for the coming year. The subjects most often requested are handled through evening programs at the Middlesex Extension Center.

Last fall, Debbie organized a group of general agricultural

agents and served as its chairperson. The group wanted to have more agricultural inservice training sessions on small farmers and their problems. Debbie credits Ronald Aronson, UConn assistant Extension director for agriculture programs, for spearheading practical training sessions for the group.

Zoning problems

Many rural towns are rewriting their zoning regulations to prohibit the keeping of pigs, cows and other livestock on land that was once zoned for agricultural use. With the "city people" moving to the countryside in greater numbers, they soon tire of the sights, sounds and smells of a barnyard which they once viewed as novel, "back to earth" and pleasant.

As the problem has increased, Debbie and other agricultural Extension educators have become involved. They testify at planning and zoning board hearings and work together with town officials to develop reasonable regulations which favor keeping and retaining their livestock operations.

In February 1978, in Deep River (population 4,000) a group of citizens from a housing development next door to a 20-acre swine farm had drafted a petition to prohibit the keeping of all livestock and poultry in this town. As county agent, Debbie spoke at the public hearing, informing those present that the townspeople consume 1 million pounds of meat, 12 million eggs and more than 2 million pounds of milk annually.

"It is important to have some locally grown food rather than to become totally dependent on food imported from faraway states," she told the hearing.

Agricultural society formed

Debbie says the farmers had prepared for the hearing by forming a local Agricultural Society 3

months earlier, and by correctly presenting speakers for the hearing in an orderly manner. The zoning board unanimously voted that the petitioners' request was unreasonable, and that livestock and poultry *could* be kept in the town.

The Agricultural Society now attempts to clear up such problems before they become legal concerns and to work with non-farm citizens to better their communications with and understandings of the livestock owners. In return, livestock owners have made every attempt to keep farms located in densely populated areas particularly clean at all times.

One family sent a bouquet of flowers to Debbie's office, thanking her for helping out when assistance was needed, and for assisting with formation of the Agricultural Society and its program of preserving farm life.

Advice

Debbie offers many words of advice to those starting small-scale farming: "Think of your veterinarian and county agent as people who can help out before the problems occur. Work out a preventive medicine program with your veterinarian. Consult your county agent for advice before need for help arises. Use common sense in all you do."

Debbie is practical. □

FINDING A FUTURE IN FARMING

by
Woody Upchurch
Agricultural News Editor
North Carolina State University

William Dial has become one of the best hog farmers in Robeson County, North Carolina, within the last 8 years.

His operation has grown from a half-dozen sows running in a woods lot to a modern confinement facility producing 1,800 market hogs a year.

The investment in buildings and equipment alone is close to \$125,000, and the value of land and animals almost doubles that figure—all from a zero start by a man who couldn't borrow a dime from a conventional lender as recently as 1970.

But the real William Dial story isn't what one man has done in building an efficient commercial hog operation, even as spectacular as that achievement has been.

William Dial, left, and Agent John Richardson survey the new hog finishing unit.

The story is the development of the man himself and his emergence as a leader in his community.

Dial is a 40-year-old Lumbee Indian, a member of a minority that makes up 32 percent of the population of one of North Carolina's largest agricultural counties.

Background

More often than not, when a Lumbee reaches adulthood he must leave the area for employment. The small farms that many of the Indians own are not large enough to support a family, although some families stay on because farming is in their blood.

Dial saw no future in farming. He attended a nearby university and became a schoolteacher. But he never lost interest in hogs and farming.

The first hogs he owned as an adult were kept in a woods lot and produced little but meat for the table. When Dial managed to buy his first 16 acres—despite rejection of all loan requests by conventional lenders—he expanded to 12 sows and put them under a barn shelter.



“William was unable to see his own potential to own and manage more than a dozen hogs,” said John Richardson, Robeson County Extension livestock agent. “He simply lacked the confidence in himself to become a commercial pork producer.”

The lack of self-confidence is common among the Lumbees of Dial’s generation. It is a major roadblock in recruiting Indians into Extension programs, according to Richardson. “They often regard the program as something for other people, not them,” the Extension agent said. “Many of them cannot relate themselves, for example, to the level of commercial hog production that is common in the county and that is earning a lot of farmers a handsome living.”

Hog Show

Dial didn’t know what Agricultural Extension was until 1970. That’s when a friend persuaded him to attend the Robeson County Hog Carcass Show, a teaching tool Richardson introduced and one that has been most effective in improving pork quality on Robeson County farms.

Dial felt out of place at the hog show. “I felt I didn’t belong there,” he said, “and when I saw the animals that were being shown and thought of my scrubby ones back home, I *knew* I didn’t belong.”

From this introduction to Extension and to quality hogs, Dial began his emergence from much of the self-doubt that was holding him back.

The transition almost didn’t come off, however. “When the Extension agent told me the first thing I should do was build a \$10,000 farrowing house, I almost went into shock. When I told my wife Carol she thought we were both crazy.”

It wasn’t an easy decision to borrow that much money, although it was possible now that Dial was a landowner. “The farrowing house was actually a more substantial structure than the house we were living in,” the farmer-teacher said. “That made things all the rougher trying to convince Carol that we needed the hog house.”

Operation Grows

Dial was obsessed with paying off the \$10,000 loan. It was paid in full in 14 months. Since then, borrowing money hasn’t been a problem.

Richardson has worked hand-in-glove with Dial during the major growth period. The livestock agent felt that he was breaking new ground with his new client, and he was.

“Our work with Dial and a few others like him has gone a long way in getting Extension more substantially into the Indian community with major programs,” said Richardson.

“Having one of their own succeed with hogs on a large commercial scale has convinced more of the small Indian landowners that they can do the same thing.”

Success Story

Dial is a regular at Extension-

sponsored educational meetings and tours. He enters his animals in local shows with confidence that they will be competitive with the best. He encourages his Indian friends to improve and expand their hog enterprises, too.

Dial’s own operation continues to grow, and so does he as a community leader. His entire operation is now on concrete and automated with the recent completion of a \$70,000 finishing floor and automatic feeding system. He has acquired 100 acres of land since the hog operation began to expand, and remodeled his and Carol’s home.

Dial is no longer uncomfortable when attending local or state livestock meetings. He isn’t surprised when Agent Richardson wants to bring a new producer out to see a “model” confinement operation.

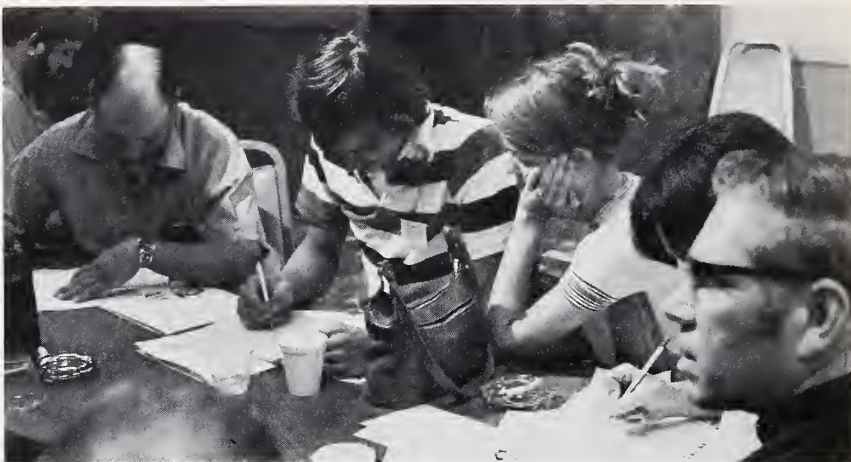
Unlike the first time he tried it, Dial can now sit at the head table at the annual meeting of the Robeson County Livestock Association without feeling out of place.

This year he is wielding the gavel as the association’s president. □

SMALL FARM CONFERENCES —

“GIVING THE LITTLE GUY A SAY”

by
Ovid Bay
Small Farm Program Coordinator
Science and Education
Administration — Extension



These small farmers attended the Midwest Conference in Des Moines, Iowa.

“Farmers are the last group with enough independence to look the government straight in the eye and say no,” said Andy Lund, who farms, logs, works in a service station and preaches in his rural community near Black River Falls, Wisconsin.

Lund is one of the more than 400 farmers and spouses who were delegates to five regional Small Farm Conferences held this summer in Alabama, Iowa, New Mexico, Oregon, and Maine. Selected by an ad hoc committee in each state, they represented all the small farmers from their communities.

The Department of Agricul-

ture, Community Services Administration (CSA) and ACTION jointly sponsored the conferences and the travel, lodging, and meals of the farmer delegates. They spent most of the day and a half in workshops, discussing and rating problems that they felt caused small farmers, like themselves, the most trouble.

Problems

There was a strong feeling the lending structure, tax structure, many government programs, and national fiscal and monetary policies are stacked against the needs of small farmers. They made many suggestions for changes and improvements in simplifying paperwork and streamlining bureaucratic capital and security structures.

The delegates felt that prices for farm products are too low; small farmers need 100 percent of parity to assure profit; and that organizing marketing cooperatives should be given higher priority.

Production was a major concern. Small farmers felt they lack the capacity to absorb higher production costs and technologi-

cal developments. They want more research and education materials on new technology that is appropriate for small farm operations. Government regulations make it difficult for many of them to hire seasonal and part-time labor.

“Government programs and agribusiness have helped the big farmer and hurt the little guy,” said Bill Black of Spencer, Iowa. Remaining skeptical about the long-range results of the conferences, he said, “They could be as helpful as anything in solving the problems of small farmers, if the federal agencies take the suggestions they hear, grab the issue by the horns, and do something about it.”



At the Northwest Small Farm Conference in Oregon, Fred Schumacher, left, took care of 7-week-old Janos, while Leah

served as a delegate. Jim Geringer, far right, chased 7-month-old Mary while Sherry attended the work group sessions.

Family Living

Inheritance taxes are making it difficult to keep even small farms in the family was the opinion of many delegates. Others said that young farmers need more educational opportunities, and that small farm families need more access to health insurance. Many felt that their off-farm jobs interfered with family life—“... not enough time to enjoy it.”

Land and Water

It is very difficult for small farmers to secure adequate water for irrigation or to secure additional water. Delegates said that there is often loss of small farm water rights to non-agricultural uses including recreation, municipal, industrial, and unreasonable environmental preservation demand.

Prime agricultural land, the small farmers said, needs to be protected from urban sprawl, highways, and other non-agricultural uses. They felt that land purchases by federal and state agencies for flood control, recreation, wildlife areas, etc., are putting pressure on prices and driving them up.

“In this more society, land has become a commodity for investors who aren’t interested in ranching,” said Joe Stillwell, Antler, Oklahoma. “The outside guys are willing to pay big money for the land. That means the price of all land in the area goes up, and the small farmer can no longer afford it. Local farmers unable to compete for land must do custom work for the absentee landowners to make a living.”

Other Recommendations

“My workgroup feels our recommendations are a mandate to the government to really use the information received at these (small farm) conferences—for once—to make changes in programs and regulations to help small farmers,” said Jerry Boyle, Dexter, Iowa.

Added Pat Boyle, “Farmers are complex individuals—managers, mechanics, veterinarians, bookkeepers—and have a great sense of pride in their family, their land, and their Nation. Hence, it is hard for a farmer to stand up and say he’s in trouble when maybe he should.” She thinks more small farmers must be represented on state and county agricultural committees.

USDA’s answer to the challenge from the delegates “To do something now” includes:

— The Agricultural Credit Act of 1978 signed into law on August 4, 1978, which will provide some very significant benefits to small, low-income, limited-resource farm operators by Farmers Home Administration (FmHA).

— Alex Mecure, assistant secretary of agriculture for rural development, sent a memo on August 14 to all State Rural Development Chairmen requesting each state to establish a Small Farm Task Force “to help develop action responses to issues identified at the various Small Farm Conferences.” Most states have now responded to this request and many have reported they are including the small farm operators from the state who attended the regional conference.

— The Farmers Home Administration, Soil Conservation Service, (SCS) Forest Service, (FS) Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, (ASCS), Science and Education Administration, (SEA), and other agencies are examining present procedures and regulations to see what changes need to be made to improve programs and services to small and low-income farmers.

Summed up Small Farmer Lund: “No matter how good your government is and no matter how good your loan companies are, you cannot borrow yourself out of debt. And, there ain’t no way anybody will loan you a profit.”

□

Washington in Review

USDA Awards \$14.4 Million in SEA Research Grants

The first year of the SEA competitive research grants program was completed on September 29 when Secretary of Agriculture Bob Bergland announced the last group of awards. There are 197 projects adding up to \$14.4 million in grant funds, with \$9.6 million allocated to crop research and \$4.8 million to human nutrition research.

The grants program was authorized by Congress last year to increase the basic knowledge in the fields of plant science and human research. Land-grant universities and state agricultural experiment stations were awarded 122 of the 197 grants.

Dry Hay When the Sun Shines

Scientists with USDA and the University of Illinois soon will explore ways of using solar energy to dry large bales of hay. The 1-year project, funded by the Department of Energy and administered by the Science and Education Administration (SEA), represents part of a continuing effort by the two departments to develop solar systems in order to conserve dwindling supplies of fossil fuels. The scientists plan to develop equipment that will economically force sun-heated air into the dense centers of bales where drying is most difficult.

Women Named to Top Posts in SEA

Three women have recently been appointed to top positions in the Science and Education Administration (SEA) at USDA: Alice Skelsey, chief, information staff; Katherine Tollerton, chief, legislative staff; and Mary Nell Greenwood, associate deputy director for Extension.

Skelsey served as Regional Information Officer at the Beltsville Agriculture Research Center for the past 5 years. Tollerton, with several years' experience on Capitol Hill, came from the American Association of State Colleges and Universities. Greenwood was formerly Director of Programs for the Missouri Cooperative Extension Service.

Solar Energy for Livestock Farms

The Science and Education Administration (SEA) has arranged with the Department of Energy (DOE) for \$1.2 million in reimbursable funds to demonstrate the use of solar energy on livestock farms. Plans are to fund 50 to 100 demonstrations in 5 to 10 states. Project leader for SEA-Extension is William Cox.



New Coal Mine Reclamation Program Initiated

A new USDA program to reclaim non-federal coal-mined land in 29 states became effective last fall. The Rural Abandoned Mine Land Program (RAMP) provides technical assistance and costshare funds for reclaiming the damaged land. RAMP will be administered by the Soil Conservation Service (SCS) in cooperation with the U.S. Departments of Interior and State, plus local governments, private landowners, and soil and water conservation districts.

Eligible owners of abandoned coal mined lands can begin signing up for the program with SCS field offices about February 1, 1979.

Kentucky Receives Pilot Weather Marketing Information Program

Farmers in two Kentucky counties will soon be able to view up-to-the-minute weather, agricultural, and marketing information 24 hours-a-day on their television sets through a joint USDA and National Weather Service (NWS) pilot information project.

A small computer terminal will be attached to the television sets of the approximately 200 farmers who will be chosen to participate in the weather market project. The farmer can then dial a special telephone number any time of day. The terminal will link him or her to a larger computer which will transmit the programmed data to a terminal for viewing at his or her convenience. Terminals will be provided free to those participating in the test.

This project will determine if such an on-call information service is feasible and beneficial to farmers and other agri-business interests. Agreement for the pilot project was signed by the Science and Education Administration (SEA), the Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

Tennessee Launches Attack on Soil Erosion

Federal and Tennessee officials have agreed on a general plan to combat "critical" soil erosion in 21 counties in western Tennessee. The proposed plan will reduce soil losses estimated at 30 to 40 tons per acre of cropland annually in western Tennessee.

The state-federal erosion control plan includes demonstration farms, small resource demonstration areas, accelerated information and education programs, completion of soil surveys, and proposed special ASCS projects. An old-fashioned field day is scheduled for Spring 1979. State, area, and county rural development committees will coordinate the effort.

HORSELESS 4-H CLUB “ADOPTS” A HORSE



Mushroom Steve and friends.

by
Leo Brauer
Publications Editor
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Most kids would never think of adopting a horse.

But 11 youngsters — all members of a Cochran Elementary School 4-H Club in Jefferson County — got the idea and did just that. They adopted a horse.

The school is located in the central part of Louisville. Students normally are not exposed to domestic animals, such as horses.

The kids all live near the school and in this particular 4-H club, not one had even seen a "real live" horse. In fact, that's the case of most of the students in the school.

Arlene Tabor, a teacher in the school and a 4-H leader, began introducing "the Cochran kids" to animals and other wonders of nature to make education more alive and interesting.

Club formed

The children were so receptive that Tabor decided to form a 4-H horse club. It was a "horseless" club, but that didn't dull the appeal to the membership.

One of the first things on the club agenda was to "meet" a horse. Tabor took the youngsters to Louisville Downs to witness a night of harness racing as a part of her teaching plan. They saw a live horse and learned about one phase of the horse industry in Kentucky.

Ironically, the youngsters saw a horse in one of the races commit a harness racing "sin" of breaking into a full gallop in a race. That "sinning" horse was "Mushroom Steve." Tabor says the incident drew the attention of the youngsters to the horse and that began their infatuation with the animal.

Mushroom Steve

When the 4-H horse club was formed, they adopted Steve and took his name for their club — The Friends of Mushroom Steve 4-H Club.

The kids sent him carrots on Valentine's Day. Later they met

Steve in his stable at the track. Tabor made arrangements with the owner for the visit — and each youngster, armed with a carrot, got a chance to rub Steve's nose and feed him.

"They were hesitant about getting too close at first, but after touching his nose and feeding him, they quickly became fast friends," Tabor said.

Later these same "experienced" 4-H'ers acted as guides to take other Cochran students to the track to visit the horse.

In the classroom, the students often refer to "Mushroom Steve" in relation to their studies, and through the horse have taken new interest in formal instruction — something that "rubs off" on other students in the classes.

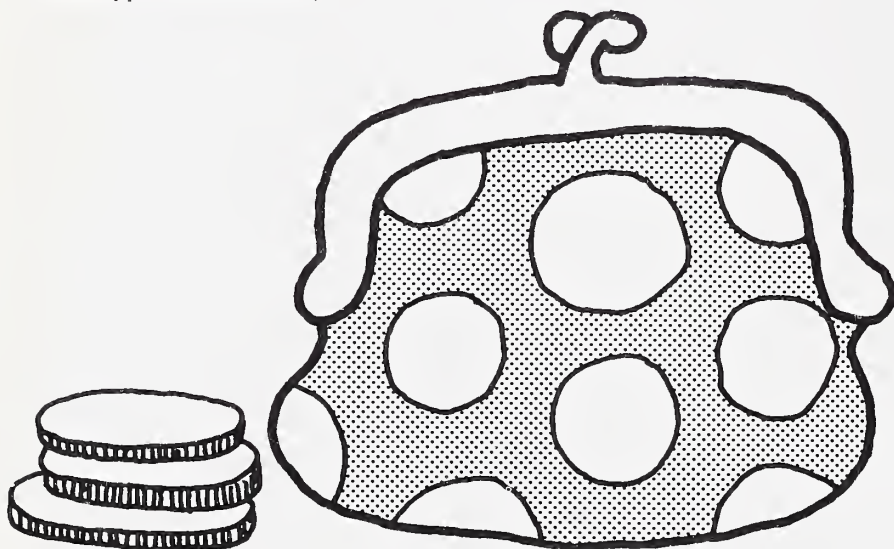
"It's a story of how urban youngsters — far remote from the experiences of rural 4-H programs — can become involved in learning," said Ron Hickey, University of Kentucky Extension 4-H program specialist. "We need the likes of Tabor as volunteer leaders to become involved in leading 4-H'ers in projects and programs."

The "horseless" 4-H club has adopted more than a horse. "Mushroom Steve" has taken learning out into the community.

□

KIDS + CASH = MONEY MANAGEMENT

by
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Several hundred preschool children in Pearl River County can tell you about money: what it is, where it's kept, how it's spent.

They're participants in a money management course geared especially for preschoolers. Those who've completed the four-lesson course proudly display brightly colored construction paper "certificates" and fat piggy banks.

The project was a joint effort of the Future Business Leaders of America at Picayune Memorial High School and the Family Life Committee of the Pearl River County Extension Homemakers Council. The course has reached nearly 500 youngsters in local kindergartens and the Head Start Center since October 1977. Last spring it was expanded to include kids in Poplarville and Carriere.

Four lessons: "I Want To Be", "Where Does Daddy's Money Go?", "Where Money Is Kept" and "Places To Go" are the basis of the program. Mary Hough, Extension home economist, and five business and office education students teach the sessions. The students are: Amy Barker, Kathy Lambert, Barbara Croas, Marilyn Best and Dianne Smith.

Before they began teaching, the high school students attended a day-long workshop directed by Julia Barnes, Mississippi Cooperative Extension Service spe-

cialist in home management.

"The preschoolers are enthusiastic about sharing their own ideas," said Hough. "Many think they know what profession they'd like to enter. We've heard about everything from football players to nurses, pilots, police officers and firefighters.

"They learn quickly that most money is spent on food, clothes and a place to sleep," she added. "We do try to teach them that these needs should be taken care of first and that money left over should be saved for enjoyment such as a family outing or special food treats.

"The children learn to recognize coins of different denominations and know where to keep them: in wallets, safes, banks. We want them to understand that money isn't a goal in itself. It's only one resource of living," she said.

"We teach the children that some things don't cost money and are still enjoyable, such as a trip to the library or to the park. What they learn about money now will influence their attitudes as adults."

As a followup, parents of each child are contacted by letter. The parents' report emphasizes money management principles, principles of basic banking, use of a checking account, family spending plans and other basics of home management. Parents are urged to request Extension publications. They can seek Extension assistance in preparing suitable spending plans if they feel their income is not being spent wisely, or if they have trouble keeping expenditures at reasonable levels.

"A first grade teacher in Slidell, Louisiana, is using the information in her classroom, and a kindergarten teacher in Georgia has requested copies of the four lessons," said Hough. "We're reaching a new audience for Extension." □

"HOME" WORK AIDS YOUNG AND OLD

by

Howard E. Frisbee

Extension Editor

The Ohio State University

HOME may be where the heart is, but it can also be where the repair problems are—especially for older persons living independently.

To meet this need, SEA-Extension, USDA, developed a pilot project in Ohio called H.O.M.E. (Helping Oldsters Maintain Environment).

Project H.O.M.E. was designed to meet the obvious needs of the elderly for services, by relating to another problem—high unemployment among teenagers. Through a special training program, teenagers involved in the project developed marketable skills.

Operation Repair

For 3 months last spring, trained "teen apprentices" repaired faucets, downspouts, windows, and screen doors, and installed handrails and grab bars. They also painted inside and outside the homes of older people in Morgan, Monroe, Pike and Adams counties. Clients were charged only for materials used. Of the 115 repairs made for clients during the operation of Project H.O.M.E., two-fifths were carpentry related, and one-third related to plumbing.

The project was planned, administered and evaluated by the Ohio Cooperative Extension

Service and the Ohio Council on Aging. Golden Jackson and Judith Wessel, Extension home economics specialists at The Ohio State University (OSU), served as directors of Project H.O.M.E.

The four counties selected were rural (had county seats with fewer than 10,000 people). At least 11 percent of their populations were older people (over 60).

Needs survey

Before the project began, the four counties were surveyed to learn about housing conditions and repair needs, and whether older persons would be willing to hire teenagers to make repairs for them. Joyce Matthews of OSU directed the survey. After a favorable response, teen apprentices—both girls and boys—were recruited through schools and 4-H clubs. Those selected received at least 16 hours' training under the supervision of apprentice trainers. Most of these trainers were retired people with home repair skills. They checked each job before it was approved.

Each county also hired a

program aide to provide leadership to the training and operation of the program.

Nearly all clients who responded to a questionnaire at the end of the project said they were "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with the work done. They found the teenagers "easy to talk to" and described their feelings as "comfortable" to "very comfortable" in having teen workers in their homes. Nearly all (85 percent) believed the teens were responsible, and all clients reported that they would hire teens again.

Over half of the clients indicated that the work done had "made their homes in better repair," and 46 percent reported that the repairs had "made their homes safer."

One elderly woman, for whom teens had done some painting, wrote, "Thanks so much. Their work was fine, and they did a great job. I am so happy to have it all done and many thanks for helping me."

When asked about additional work they would like done, clients mentioned painting, carpentry, plumbing, cleaning, yard work, wallpapering, and electrical inspection.

Program continues

The enthusiastic approval of the project by clients has encouraged leaders to seek ways to continue the teen assistance for older persons. Efforts are being made in each county to sell the idea to some other agency or group that would operate the service permanently.

In October, Extension agents interested in setting up H.O.M.E. projects in their counties received special training. Subjects considered were: the philosophy of training teenagers to help oldsters, how to hire people, how to set up a H.O.M.E. center (tools and features), and working with other agencies and funding sources. □

DRUMS BEAT FOR INDIAN CULTURE

by
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Eugene, Oregon

Hear that muffled beat of Indian drums?

It echoes the success of 1,500 Home Extension women in Lane County, Oregon, in developing a countywide 4-month study project. The project forged personal bonds between them and the county's 2,000 Indians, and initiated public interest in a growing minority group.

"We discovered we'd tapped a subject of real concern when we publicized our meetings on Native Americans of the Pacific



Northwest," says Velma Mitchell, Lane Extension agent. "Everybody was eager to learn about our local Indian tribes, about the problems the modern Indian faces and about what is being done to alleviate these problems. But our greatest satisfaction was the enthusiastic participation by the Indians themselves in the project."

Beginning

Arden Johnson, Eugene, Lane Home Extension cultural arts chairperson worked with Mitchell in introducing Home Extension's first-year cultural arts program.

They contacted resource leaders, sought exhibits of rare Indian artifacts, arranged for Indian crafts demonstrations, and developed handout material including a make-it-yourself Indian moccasin pattern.

"We discovered it wasn't all that easy to research material about our local Indian tribes," Johnson said. "Much of the material remains unwritten. But thanks to the cooperation of local Indians, we were able to present authentic information as well as a treasure house of Indian articles."

In early January, volunteer leader-teachers from the

county's Home Extension study groups received training. These women later developed and presented eight countywide public meetings in February.

As this groundwork was being laid, little did anyone expect the spontaneous enthusiasm the program would arouse. Highlights included Indian Cultural Arts Night cosponsored by local Indian groups and a chartered bus tour for 200 to the Maryhill Museum of Indian Arts on the Columbia River in Southern Washington.

"We remained flexible in our planning," Mitchell said. "But throughout we held to our original goals—to inform, to stimulate interest in Indian crafts, legends and history, and to instill pride among Indians in their culture."

Volunteer training

Two Home Extension study group members, both retired teachers—one an author of a textbook on Indians, the other a specialist on Indian artifacts—led the leader training.

The volunteer leaders left the sessions steeped in Indian lore. They learned to prepare the recipes that Mitchell had researched for authentic Indian foods—pemmican made of groundup dried meat and berries, squaw bread, rabbit stew. They viewed exhibits of centuries old Indian implements, and acquired a certain expertise in the Indian skills of storytelling, basketmaking, feather craft, and leather sewing.

They also gained a fresh focus on the Indian "today."

Representatives of the Eugene Indian Center, including the Chief of the Coquille tribe, reported on their goals in education, employment, housing and health.

The February district meetings were widely publicized through the local press, radio and tele-

vision. More than 700 people attended these meetings held in grange halls, community centers, churches and schools.

Program expands

In April, the interest in the Indian lesson continued to grow. Requests poured into the county Extension office from Indian groups, Home Extension women, and the public for an evening program on Indians.

"The Indian Cultural Arts Night" became the colorful finale to months of work and study.

A building at the county fairgrounds was converted to a traditional longhouse for the program cosponsored by the Indian Women's Group and Lane Home Extension. Featured were two native American dance groups, a newly released documentary film on the Siletz Indians of the Oregon Coast, demonstrations of Indian crafts and artifacts. A panel of Indians talked frankly about problems—employment, education, drug and alcohol abuse—and how they were working toward solutions.

"We all feel enriched from exploring the depths of the Indian heritage, and establishing rapport with a fine group of people," Mitchell said as she summed up the program. □



PILOT PROJECT— PLANNING FOR PAHRUMP

by
Dave Mathis
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Pahrump, Nevada, is changing. It hardly resembles its old self.

The town began as a farming area, but is growing more urban. Pahrump is about the only place in Nevada where cotton was, and still is, grown. Most of the town's residents think the changes are just beginning.

Pahrump might have remained a green cropland oasis basking in the hot sun of the Nevada desert except for two reasons: Las Vegas growth and the Nevada Atomic Test Site.

High-rising peaks of the Spring Mountain Range isolate Pahrump from Las Vegas, 60 miles east. Mercury, the principal location of the Nevada Atomic Test Site, is 50 miles north.

The Las Vegas area population is now about a half million. Many people who work there have sought the quieter, less crowded Pahrump Valley in which to live. Pahrump, too, has become a desirable home location for Test Site employees. It is fast becoming a "bedroom" community.

Growth

Ten years ago, the population didn't quite total more than 500 persons. Today the community

has grown to about 2,000; most coming since 1973. This population is primarily working people and their families, although a number of retired persons also reside in the area.

As growth continued, Pahrump was plagued by lack of community services.

There was no emergency health service, and even had there been, getting an ambulance to a patient's home would have been a major undertaking. No adequate map of Pahrump existed; moreover, a lot of roads were not even named.

In 1973 Pahrump became the object of a pilot program under Title V of the Rural Development Act of 1972 and Michael Mooney brought Cooperative Extension into the picture. Mooney is the Southern Nevada Area Community Resource Development Extension Agent.

Pilot Program

A first step, said Mooney, was to determine if the community wanted help. Did the people want to be left alone, or would they welcome assistance? The latter proved correct as Mooney, Chauncey Ching and others from

the University of Nevada - Reno (UNR) met with Nye County Commissioners and with the Pahrump Town Advisory Council. Ching is chairman of the Agricultural and Resource Economics Division of UNR's College of Agriculture and overall coordinator of Nevada Title V projects.

When Extension and the community mutually agreed to implement a rural development program, it became evident that an information base was needed. Working together, Extension and the Town Council developed a survey to assess the community's attitudes and gather basic human resource data. At the same time, a population census was undertaken.

To assure an accurate population count, an Extension agent identified on a map the location of each residence and the name of the resident. This resulted in an accurate population census and an up-to-date town locator map. The map is useful for volunteer firefighters, law enforcement personnel, health service suppliers, and search and rescue organizations.

Survey Results

Survey results showed resident dissatisfaction with health care services. The nearest physicians and drug stores were located in Las Vegas. Armed with this information, Pahrump residents, with assistance from Extension and the county commissioners, were able to add a health care clinic to the new county buildings. The state located a full-time registered nurse and secretary in the clinic. Coincidentally, a physician planning to retire from his Fallon, Nevada, practice began a part-time practice in Pahrump.

The second highest priority indicated in the survey was the development of programs for Pahrump youth. Extension responded by hiring a part-time 4-H aide. 4-H enrollment jumped from around a dozen or so youth to nearly 100.

Another aspect of the survey, the "Pahrump Valley Resource Atlas," made non-residents aware of the community's needs and characteristics. The Valley Bank of Nevada, finding the area's resources to be sufficient enough to justify investment, located a branch bank in Pahrump.

Mobile home parks, housing subdivisions, a new middle school and high school, and an 18-hole golf course now cover what was once cotton acreage in Pahrump. Some farmers, are still operating—raising cattle, and growing cotton, alfalfa, and other crops.

The people of Pahrump didn't turn their backs to changes in their community—they became involved.

As Extension Agent, Mooney sums it up "people need to want change and participate in the direction of that change." □



people and programs in review

Michigan Urban 4-H Programs Receive Support

Volunteer leaders involved in the 4-H and Department of Social Services urban expansion program have donated more than \$42,000 worth of time and in-kind services to nearly 10,000 new 4-H members in seven urban Michigan counties. These findings were reported in a 4-month interim progress report by the Michigan State University Center for Urban Affairs. The seven counties received funds in 1977 to conduct urban and suburban expansion programs from the Michigan legislature through the Department of Social Services.

Kentucky: Special Home Energy Edition

Kentucky has published their second Special Energy Edition of the UK Ag Report. It is tabloid-size with 24 pages of information on energy use and conservation, and was directly mailed to 400,000 homes in the state. The high press run cut the cost down to only a few pennies per copy. Sandra Smith, Extension specialist for energy conservation, coordinated this special issue, which includes a copy of Kentucky's revised Computerized Home Energy Analysis Program (CHEAP), and how you can audit your home's energy efficiency.

Missouri Uses Sideband for Hard-to-Reach Youth

Missouri is using FM-sideband radio to reach children in hospitals, speech and hearing clinics, special school districts, and learning disabilities centers. The program, called "The Spider's Web" reached 3,600 youths in the St. Louis area.

Teachers, counselors, and speech therapists were contacted and recruited concerning use of the program in a manner that would best benefit the children. A total of 132 30-minute programs were broadcast twice daily from the University of Missouri, St. Louis campus.

Pifer Appointed Energy Contact

Glenda Pifer, housing specialist, has been recently designated as the contact person in SEA-Extension for energy programs. She has given leadership in the energy aspects of housing and family living programs since 1973. In addition to assisting states in programming, Pifer also works with other government agencies in coordinating energy efforts. She was recently named to the USDA Energy Task Force and serves on the ECOP Energy Task Force.